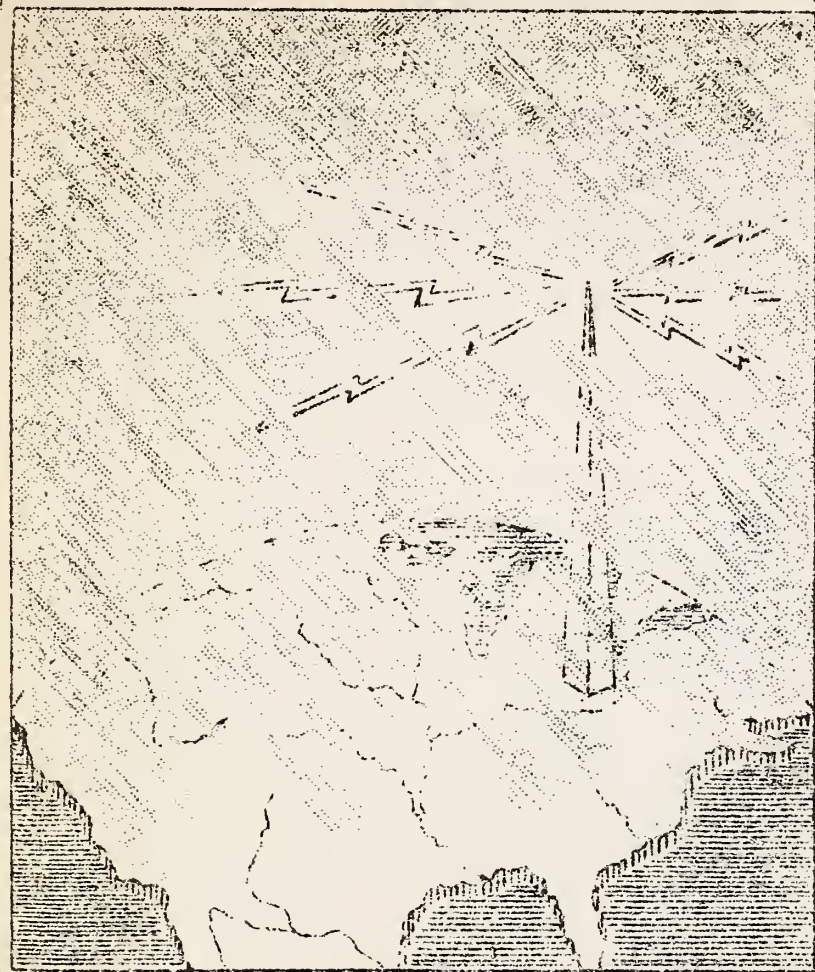


## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.





FORTUNES

WASHED

AWAY

"PEANUT FARMING"

Broadcast No. 9 in the third year  
in a series of dramatizations  
of better land use

WLW, Cincinnati

June 22, 1940

1:15-1:30 p.m.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE  
DAYTON, OHIO



SOUND: Thunder and rain...

ANNOUNCER

Fortunes Washed Away!

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

ANNOUNCER

North Carolina is second in the nation's production of a billion pound crop, an annual with hairy stem and two-paired, abruptly pinnate leaflets. It is a legume--its pods contain peanuts. Some call it ground-nut, earth-nut, manilla nut, some call it Pistache de Terre, some just plain goober. Whatever name it may have, the peanut has been a profitable enterprise in more than one region of light, sandy soils. Such a region is Cumberland County, North Carolina. Rudolph Ellis, a 16-year-old red-headed farm boy, had an idea back in 1936...

NARRATOR

Of course, I didn't dream it would pan out like it did. I had just joined the 4-H Club, and like everybody else, I picked out a project to carry out the practical side of the club work. My dad was a peanut farmer, and I decided to grow one acre myself. At harvest time, I began to figure. Why couldn't I roast these peanuts and sell them in Fayetteville? The notion whirled around in my brain, so I decided to talk to my club adviser about it. His name was M. E. Hollowell, assistant farm agent of the North Carolina Extension Service in Cumberland County...(fade)

HOLLOWELL (fade in)

And so you have your crop in, Rudolph.

ELLIS

Yessir, Mister Hollowell. And when I finished weighing 'em, I had more than 2,300 pounds of peanuts.



HOLLOWELL

How much hay did you make from the vines?

ELLIS

About a ton.

HOLLOWELL

That's pretty good for a beginner. But what's this crazy idea of yours?

ELLIS

Well, what I was thinking about, Mr. Hollowell, was roasting these peanuts and selling 'em here in Fayetteville. If I sell 'em just as they are now, I won't get more than three and a half cents a pound for 'em.

HOLLOWELL

Aren't you worried about the competition? You know, there are two or three people already selling roasted peanuts here. You've got to remember that there's more to this business of selling than just thinking about it. It'll take lots of work.

ELLIS

Oh, I'm not afraid of work. I'm sure I can do it.

HOLLOWELL

What about your school work? You don't want to neglect that.

ELLIS

All my afternoons and Saturdays will be free. I can take care of my business then.

HOLLOWELL

You've got a chance, Rudolph. You're doing the right thing by growing peanuts on your land. It's sandy, and well supplied with lime. In other words, it's good land use.

ELLIS

You mean...

HOLLOWELL

There's a proper use for every acre. Very steep land should be kept in forests, so it won't wash away. The rolling land, by and large, should be in pastures or meadow. The gentle slopes and the flat lands can be used for cultivated crops. That, in a peanut-shell, is what we call proper land use.

ELLIS

Oh, don't worry about me taking care of the land. I've heard too much about what soil erosion has done to the Piedmont section.

HOLLOWELL

All right -- go ahead. You've got an excellent opportunity if you follow it up.

ELLIS

I know it, and when I start, my competition had better look out, or my name's not "Red" Ellis.

ORGAN: PEANUT VENDOR.

NARRATOR

That was how I started a tiny business. At first, I had a lot of trouble in roasting my peanuts. I remember late one afternoon, when my mother came home...(fade)

MRS. ELLIS

My goodness! Here it is 5:30, and I don't have these biscuits in the oven yet. Oh, well, it won't be long now. (HUMS). There, they're all ready. I'll pop 'em right in the oven.

SOUND: Opening of oven door...

MRS. ELLIS (gasping)

Well, of all things. Of all things. (CALLING OFF MIKE) Rudolph!  
Rudolph!

ELLIS (fading in)

Did you call me, Mother?

MRS. ELLIS

Did I call you? Yes, I did. What in the world are you doing with all these peanuts in my oven?

ELLIS

Roasting 'em.

MRS. ELLIS

Well, you just roast 'em right out of there. Your father will be home any minute now, and these supper biscuits have to go into that oven.

ELLIS

Aw, gee, Mother...

MRS. ELLIS

Get 'em out of there!

ELLIS

Yessum.

SOUND: Rattling of peanuts being scraped into bucket...

ELLIS

Say, Mother, I've got an idea.

MRS. ELLIS (kindly)

I hope it's not about my oven.

ELLIS

Don't you think I could make a roaster out of that old oil drum in the barn?

MRS. ELLIS

I don't know, son. I guess you could. And I certainly wish you would.



ELLIS

I betcha I can. I'm gonna try it, anyway.

ORGAN: PEANUT VENDOR.

MRS. ELLIS (in narrator style)

Luck must have reserved a special little place in her heart for my boy. Perhaps she liked the way the boy hustled. In one way shy, in another sure of himself, Rudolph made friends among the merchants of Fayetteville, who agreed to handle his peanuts. To get his peanuts to market five miles away, he used his bicycle. First he carried them in a basket. Then, as his business grew, he made a trailer for his bicycle. (fade)

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

ELLIS

Mother! Hey, Mother!

MRS. ELLIS (off mike)

In the kitchen, Rudolph.

ELLIS (out of breath)

I sold 'em--every one.

MRS. ELLIS

Why, Rudolph! You're getting to be a real merchant.

ELLIS

Yeah. Now I want to grow some more next year. I'd like to grow about five acres.

MRS. ELLIS

I believe you can do it. I've heard the merchants say that they are glad to buy from use because you don't deliver anything but high quality peanuts.

ELLIS

Sure! They're the real McCoy...but Mother...

MRS. ELLIS

Yes?

ELLIS

Do you suppose father would let me borrow his car if I do?

MRS. ELLIS

Well, that's something you'll have to talk over with him--but I imagine he might.

ELLIS (With enthusiasm)

Look! I'd like to start peddling in Dunn, and Lillington, and Erwin. Can't you just imagine...

SOUND: Auto motor, down and under...

MERCHANT

Sure, give me five dozen bags. They sell like hot cakes.

SOUND: Motor, up and down...

MERCHANT

Ten dozen bags this time, Red. Helps my soft drink trade.

SOUND: Motor, up and down...

MERCHANT

Think I can sell 15 dozen this week, Red.

SOUND: Motor, up and out...

NARRATOR (fading in)

...business kept getting better, and in 1938, I bought a half interest in an automobile. I widened my market to include Elizabethtown, St. Paul, Hope Mills, and White Lake. All this time, while I was handling the peanuts, I was going to high school, taking part in the 4-H Club work, and helping out on the farm. But my competition was tough, and I had to use a little ingenuity sometimes...

NEGRO

Howdo, Mistah Red.

ELLIS

Hello, Charlie. Wanta bag of peanuts?

NEGRO

Ah sho' does. Ain't had nuthin' t'eat since ah left home dis mawnin.

ELLIS

Well, look. Here's a nickel. See that store over there--

NEGRO

You mean Nick's Place?

ELLIS

Yeah. (WHISPERED BUZZ)

SOUND: Opening and closing of shop door.

SHOPKEEPER

What you want, boy?

NEGRO

Ah wants a bag of Mistah Red's roasted peanuts. Here's mah money.

SHOPKEEPER

Here you are.

NEGRO

Dat ain't Mistah Red's peanuts. He puts a red stamp on his.

SHOPKEEPER

But these are just as good.

NEGRO

Nawsuh, I'se sorry. Ef'fen you ain't got Mistah Red's peanuts...

SHOPKEEPER

Whatsa matter with you? Why you no like thesa peanuts?

NEGRO

'Cause ah jest wants some of Mistah Red's. Think ah'll go next door.

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

ELLIS (fading in)

Did you do it, Charlie?

NEGRO

Yassuh. He done like to have a fit. Said the others wuz as good as yores.

ELLIS

Good work, Charlie. Here's a bag of peanuts. Bet he'll talk business the next time I drop by (fade).

SOUND: Door opens and closes...

SHOPKEEPER

Hallo, Red.

ELLIS

Hello, Nick. How's business.

SHOPKEEPER

It'sa pretty bad.

ELLIS

Looks all right to me. How about some peanuts today?

SHOPKEEPER

Sure. I could use a few.

ELLIS

About a couple of dozen bags?

SHOPKEEPER

That'sa not enough. About five dozen.

ORGAN: PEANUT VENDOR.



NARRATOR

That same year, I added potato chips to my line. Still, all of my raw materials were grown and processed on our own farm. By 1939, I had 25 acres in peanuts, and as business kept getting better, I needed better equipment...(fade)

SOUND: Auto motor, throttle down to stop, brakes, then sound horn loudly and repeatedly.

ELLIS (shouting)

Hey, Mom!

MRS. ELLIS (off mike)

What is it, Rudolph?

ELLIS

Come here a minute!

SOUND: Door opens...

MRS. ELLIS (fading in)

Well, I'll declare. Where did you get that delivery truck?

ELLIS

I just bought it. Of course, it's not exactly a delivery truck. It's just a two-door sedan with panels instead of rear windows. And the back seat has been taken out.

MRS. ELLIS

And it has your name on the panels--Red's Roasted Peanuts. Why, son, that's fine!

ELLIS

Yeah, isn't it? Listen to this horn.

SOUND: Loud blasts of horn...

MRS. ELLIS (laughing)

That's enough, that's enough! Oh--I have a surprise for you.

ELLIS

Yeah? What?

MRS. ELLIS

Mr. Hollowell called up this afternoon. You've been picked as one of North Carolina's four delegates to the National 4-H Club encampment in Washington.

ELLIS

Gee...that's the highest honor a 4-H Club boy can get.

ORGAN: sneak in MY SON, MY SON.

MRS. ELLIS (narrator style)

Rudolph Ellis, my son, is a boy who battled and overcame obstacles that stood between him and success. He worked hard. He deserves success. He's a merchant, and he's a good farmer. And more than that, he's my son.

ORGAN: UP AND OUT.

ANNOUNCER

That is the true story of Rudolph Ellis, a red-headed farm boy from Cumberland County, North Carolina--another example of 4-H Club training in action. And now, once again we turn to the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, and here is Ewing Jones.

JONES

Thanks, \_\_\_\_\_. Just one more word about Rudolph Ellis: it's only natural that he handles his land with care, because he's a good farmer. He doesn't have to worry about soil erosion, because the land is flat and the soil is sandy, but he does take good care to see that the fertility is maintained. He doesn't grow peanuts year after year on the same land, but follows a good rotation. And as Mr. Hollowell pointed out, here is an example of good land use. I think that's something all of us should keep in mind: good land use. Land that is too steep or too irregular should never be cultivated. And cultivated land, no matter how gentle it may be, should be treated with modern soil conservation measures. If you're in doubt about the most practical methods for conserving your soil, drop in and have a chat with your friendly county agricultural agent, or stop at the nearest Soil Conservation Service office. It will be time well spent.

SOUND: Clicking of telegraph key...

ANNOUNCER

News in the conservation world!



JONES

Dr. W. C. Lowdermilk, Assistant Chief of the Soil Conservation Service, recently returned from a study of soil erosion in the Old World. His studies are highly interesting, and are more or less summed up in his illustrated leaflet, "The Eleventh Commandment." Copies of this leaflet are available for the present, so if you would like a copy of "The Eleventh Commandment", write to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio. Along with that leaflet we'll be glad to send the latest illustrated bulletin on soil conservation for your community. But what I started to say was, Dr. Lowdermilk's findings are more or less echoed in a recent editorial in the National Livestock Producer. If you please,

---

ANNOUNCER

This is the editorial. "Suicidal agricultural practices in the handling of soil problems in this country indicate that history is repeating itself here as in earlier civilizations. What has happened in North China, Korea, North Africa, Asia Minor, and Mesopotamia is already well started in this country, but fortunately we have awakened to the pricelessness of the few inches of topsoil that feeds and sustains the present generation, and should adequately take care of all that follow if proper land practices are followed. Today, literally billions of acres of originally productive lands throughout the world bear the curse of unfaithful stewards through the centuries.

Trees and grasslands can avert the irreplaceable loss from erosion. Conservation, in its fullest sense, of the basic resources of land, water and the spirit of peoples, can maintain the human values of wholesome standards of living, opportunity, freedom, justice and faith in the destiny of our modern civilization."



JONES

Thank you, \_\_\_\_\_. And remember, if you want the story of the "Eleventh Commandment", and the illustrated bulletin on soil conservation, just send a letter or a penny postcard to Soil Conservation, Dayton, Ohio. This is Ewing Jones, speaking for the Soil Conservation Service of the United States Department of Agriculture, inviting you to be with us again next week at this same time, when we bring you "The Zaleski Forest."

ORGAN THEME: I GET THE BLUES WHEN IT RAINS.

#

